



MARGARET L. HURT

Biographical Data: Grew up near Staunton, Virginia in the Shenandoah Mountains where her family had a farm

Education: Graduated High School, 1940s

NACA/NASA Experience: Employed 1954-1983; Computer, [16 Foot Tunnel](#)

Margaret Hurt began working as a computer at Langley in 1954, after friends suggested she apply at the personnel office. Her proficiency in mathematics earned her an assignment to the computing group at the 16-foot tunnel, where she worked for the entirety of her twenty-nine year career while also raising a family. At the time she was hired, the 16 Foot was the largest wind tunnel at Langley and had its own computing section of five to six women, housed in an office on the second floor.

Prior to computing at Langley, Hurt held a variety of jobs including working at a jewelry store and at a DuPont factory during World War II. She recalled that many women were being hired as computers in the 1950s, to do calculations, read film, and plot data, all of which was done by hand and required a specific skill set and expertise. Hurt worked the day shift, and described the 16 Foot Tunnel as a collaborative environment where the engineers and computers worked together on projects, and everyone addressed each other by their first names. Employees also frequently gathered for social activities outside of work, and Hurt helped organize the yearly dinner party and division picnics for the staff.

By the time Hurt retired in 1983, her section was doing more programming and the use of electronic computers was growing. She remembers her career at Langley fondly, and considers herself fortunate to have worked in a good job with a great group of people over the years.

Sources: Interview with Sarah McLennan, May 11, 2011